

THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

OCT 27 2008

LIBRARY



FOUNDED 1917



Tom Grey

White-tailed Kites are among the North Richmond shoreline's most interesting avian residents.

North Richmond Shoreline Bird Census Results In

The Richmond shoreline's 500 acres of tidal marshes and 800 acres of mudflats provide critical habitat for millions of migrating birds and resident threatened and endangered species. Yet much of its open areas are nestled among industry and under threat of development. This predicament brought out organizations from around the Bay Area to create the North Richmond Shoreline Academy in the summer of 2007. This program aimed to counter development threats by providing environmental education and wildlife experiences for local residents of all ages; engaging local citizens in a year-long bird census and the restoration of native oysters; completing a watershed assessment; and documenting the community's vision for the shoreline's future. Golden Gate Audubon partnered with Natural Heritage Institute to involve the community in the year-long bird census. After training census leaders and community participants on shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors, teams began to census the shoreline in September of 2007. For the past year, 80 participants have put in over 1,500 hours visiting Pt. Pinole Regional Shoreline, the Landfill Loop, and Wildcat Creek Staging Area in conjunction with the West County Wastewater District, in groups of two to eight people per site, four times a month.

Data was recorded at each visit and submitted to Charlotte Nolan, GGA volun-

CENSUS RESULTS continued on page 12

The Christmas Bird Count is Back

This season marks the 109th year of Christmas Bird Counts. Each count attempts to identify and count the birds within a defined 15-mile diameter circle during one calendar day. Last year, thousands of volunteers counted nearly 60 million birds across the Americas and beyond. Thanks to the National Audubon Society, the results of all counts since 1900 are accessible to everyone at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/hr/index.html>. Researchers and bird watchers alike use the data to study changes in resident bird populations.

Join your friends and take part in Golden Gate Audubon Society's 2008 Christmas Bird Counts: in Oakland on Sunday, December 14, and San Francisco on Tuesday, December 30. You'll have an enjoyable day of birding that you can cap off with a delicious dinner during which participants report results from the field, including the locations of the unusual species found that day. Invitations to both counts have been sent to everyone who participated in either count in recent years. Oakland co-compiler Bob Lewis urges prompt replies. "It really helps the compilers ensure that every area is covered well, and if you can sign up on-line it makes our job easier. Remember that we welcome all birders, no matter what their experience level."

The Oakland count circle extends from Treasure Island northeast to the San Pablo Reservoir

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT continued on page 10



INSIDE

- 3 Cleaning the Coast
- 4 A Legacy for Environmental Education
- 5 Interns Go Wild

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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BIRD BOX
415.681.7422

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elizabeth Murdock 510.843.9912

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Kevin E. Consey kconsey@goldengateaudubon.org

CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

conservationdirector@goldengateaudubon.org

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Linda Coffee 510.843.7295
lcoffee@goldengateaudubon.org

ECO-OAKLAND PROGRAM MANAGER

Anthony DeCicco 510.635.5533
adecicco@goldengateaudubon.org

ECO-OAKLAND PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Rubén Guzmán 510.635.5533
rguzman@goldengateaudubon.org

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Jennifer Robinson 510.919.5873

OFFICE MANAGER

Kristen Bunting 510.843.2222

GULL MANAGING EDITOR

Lisa Owens Viani lowensvi@sbcglobal.net

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marjorie Blackwell marjb@sbcglobal.net

FIELD TRIPS

Pam Belchamber 510.549.2839

OBSERVATIONS

Bruce Mast observe@goldengateaudubon.org

WEB EDITOR

webeditor@goldengateaudubon.org

The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets six times per year (schedule can be obtained from the main office).

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Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702

TEL 510.843.2222 FAX 510.843.5351
www.goldengateaudubon.org
ggas@goldengateaudubon.org

Nature Store hours: Monday – Friday, 9 – 12, 1 – 5

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Engaging New Communities in Conservation

Golden Gate Audubon has been a community-based organization since its inception over 90 years ago. We were formed by Bay Area individuals who were deeply concerned about conserving local birds and their habitats and who wanted to share the wonderful avian diversity of San Francisco Bay with their neighbors, friends, and community members. Some of our earliest achievements—from halting oil companies' practice of discharging crude oil into the waters surrounding the Farallones to helping to create Audubon Canyon Ranch—have relied on our local community to succeed. And, of course, our very mission has long been to serve our community members—with field trips, birding classes and other opportunities for people to enjoy and protect birds.

Today, our commitment to community-based conservation is even stronger than it was in 1917, as we prepare to launch an exciting initiative to engage increasingly diverse communities in Golden Gate Audubon's work. In June 2008, our board of directors adopted a new strategic plan that includes a diversity initiative; its goal: to build a strong, constituency for Golden Gate Audubon's conservation work and to ensure that all of our programs are relevant to people of a variety of backgrounds reflecting the broader Bay Area populace.

Diversifying our base of dedicated volunteers is critical to our conservation projects. For example, many of our most pressing conservation campaigns—efforts to create the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, conserve the North Richmond shoreline, restore San Francisco's southern waterfront, and protect Oakland's Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline—take place in underserved communities. We believe that these communities can play an important role in protecting and restoring critical areas of the Bay, and their active participation can ensure that conservation is truly local. Through our diversity initiative, we seek to engage more people from these communities in wildlife conservation: from birding to hands-on restoration to advocacy efforts to protect some of these most precious stretches of shoreline.

While our diversity initiative deepens our commitment to reaching underserved and multicultural communities and diverse populations, it is not an entirely new effort. Our Eco-Oakland environmental education program has reached over 15,000 community members in East Oakland since 1999 and successfully increased community stewardship of the local shoreline and watershed. Over the next three years, we intend to build on some of the unique strategies we have developed through nearly 10 years of work in East Oakland (as well as in other communities) to significantly increase community involvement in three target communities: North Richmond, East Oakland and Bayview-Hunters Point. Our strategies include offering more birding classes, field trips, and restoration activities in these communities; designing more activities that encourage family stewardship; offering activities in Spanish, where appropriate; and hiring community liaisons to encourage community participation and to help us design activities that better meet community needs.

We are able to initiate these ambitious efforts in 2008-2009 with significant support from TogetherGreen, a National Audubon program with funding from Toyota, which recently gave Golden Gate Audubon a \$65,000 grant to implement our *Wetlands & Wildlands* project in Bayview-Hunters Point and North Richmond. An additional very generous grant from the Jiji Foundation will serve in part to augment this project.

Our goal of truly engaging all communities in our work is lofty and challenging. But it is also vital to our work. Local conservation requires local stewardship—and Golden Gate Audubon's success in saving these critical shoreline areas depends upon community involvement. We hope that our efforts can build a stronger base of people who believe that conserving Bay Area birds and their habitats is crucial to the health of our community.

—Elizabeth Murdock



CONSERVATION CORNER

CLEANING THE COAST

The tide was low as the fog surrounded 14 GGA volunteers at Pier 94 in San Francisco on a cool September Coastal Cleanup Day. Fueled by juice and healthy snacks, the volunteers grabbed gloves and bags to clean this five-acre wetland restored and revegetated with endangered California Sea-Blite by Golden Gate Audubon in 2006. Trash removed included plastic, paper, balloons, bottles and cans, toys, bleach bottles, cigarette butts, batteries, car parts, Styrofoam, construction materials, and monofilament, or fishing line, which can entangle birds and other wildlife, among other items. The trash had floated in with the tides, blown in on the winds, or was deliberately left by people.

A bit of good news is that trash in the wetland has been decreasing over the past several years. One reason is that the quarterly Golden Gate Audubon volunteer work parties usually include some trash pickup along with native plantings, non-native weed removal, and plant monitoring. Another reason is that the Port of San Francisco installed K-rails to reduce vehicle access to the wetland.

Preliminary Coastal Conservancy reports showed that statewide, 63,482 volunteers collected 814,154 pounds of trash, of which 132,277 pounds were recyclable. Thanks to all who participated in improving habitat at Pier 94 for Brown Pelicans, Greater Yellowlegs, American Avocets, and many other birds.

—Noreen Weeden

STRAWBERRY CANYON SOS

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory perches in the hills above UC Berkeley, below the popular Lawrence Hall of Science. Its sprawling campus contains dozens of buildings, some of them new, some of them more than 60 years old. Many of its aging buildings are small and badly in need of repair; some have been condemned as unsafe. Instead of replacing existing, decrepit buildings, the large new buildings that the Lab intends to build are slated for



Greater Yellowlegs are frequent visitors to the Pier 94 wetlands.

previously undeveloped sites on the edges of the property, in Blackberry Canyon and, even more unfortunately, in Strawberry Canyon, a beautiful natural corridor that connects to Tilden Park. The Strawberry Canyon development will include a new access road to connect to Centennial Drive, which will require cutting down more than 150 trees, including many oaks and bays.

A local group called Save Strawberry Canyon has been fighting the project, and has succeeded in getting some news coverage in local papers. GGA is lending support to Save Strawberry Canyon by serving as the fiscal agent for the nascent nonprofit organization and has also submitted some letters opposing the project. People interested in helping to fight the development plans should contact Phila Rogers of Save Strawberry Canyon via email at phila-jane6@yahoo.com.

—Phil Price

MONITORING THE SOUTH WATERFRONT

In August, volunteers from Golden Gate Audubon and the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory completed a second year of monitoring nesting and roosting birds along

San Francisco's southern waterfront. This year, the Port of San Francisco sponsored an event in which volunteers surveyed for nesting and roosting birds from aboard Bay-Keeper's ship. The data will be provided to the San Francisco Estuary Institute for the San Francisco Bay Subtidal Habitat Goals Project, which identifies pilings and other substrates as possible targets for future restoration.

SPEAKING UP FOR BIRDS

In response to the recent Outside Lands Festival in San Francisco, Golden Gate Audubon requested that San Francisco Animal Control and Welfare Commission consider the potential impact of such major festivals on birds and other wildlife as they plan future such events. For example, in 2008, the festival took place in Golden Gate Park in a three-mile area that was cordoned off with chain link fence for 10 days: some wildlife had no access to water, and it is likely that feeding and roosting areas for birds were impacted. The festival attracted between 130,000 and 140,000 people, with music and lights until 10:00 p.m. GGA has asked that the City make efforts to schedule events outside the breeding season and that bird foraging and roosting habitats be researched before a five-year contract is awarded for future concerts.

The sponsors for Lights Out for Birds (American Bird Conservancy, S.F. Department of the Environment, and Golden Gate Audubon) met on September 24 with representatives from the Building Owners and Managers Association, S.F. Citizens for Smart Lighting, S.F. Zoological Society, and WildCare regarding our continuing campaign to save energy and prevent bird building collisions. All parties expressed willingness to move forward. The next step will be a meeting with PG&E to help quantify energy savings.

BIKE FOR BIRDS

The San Francisco Conservation Committee is looking for a volunteer interested in

CONSERVATION CORNER continued on page 9

Creating a Legacy for Environmental Education

Carol Sughrue recalls exactly when she became “a huge fan” of Golden Gate Audubon. “When I found out they wanted to convert the Alameda Naval Base into a bird sanctuary,” she says, “I was so excited. I worked at the Alameda Naval Exchange in 1964 during the buildup to the Vietnam War, and it was all military. And to think that an instrument of war could become a bird sanctuary, I couldn’t believe it! It really made me appreciate Golden Gate Audubon.”

To show her appreciation and support, Carol decided to leave a legacy to Golden Gate Audubon. Carol wanted to direct her legacy gift specifically to support education programs for youth, so she met with Executive Director Elizabeth Murdock and Golden Gate Audubon past president Steve Margolin, who also volunteers estate planning assistance to Golden Gate Audubon, to discuss what she hoped to achieve through her generous gift. These discussions led to an agreement with Golden Gate Audubon to establish The Carol A. Sughrue Student Education Project, which will provide hands-on environmental experiences to Bay Area students to help them understand how they can play a personal role in conserving wildlife and wildlife habitats and to inspire and empower them to become leaders in conservation.

“I am so happy with this agreement and am very confident in my decision,” Carol says. “There will always be a need for education—today and 100 years from now. So many extra-curricular programs have been cut back, and kids need to be outside and exposed to the environment.” She was dismayed to read a recent news article about students taking “a virtual trip” to the ocean. “This is not a real experience,” she notes. “The kids can’t taste the salt air, walk on the sand, feel the fog, or see the birds flying.”

She remembers her own outdoor discoveries when her family moved to the Bay Area. “I loved living in such a diverse area,” she says. “We have everything right here, from the redwood forests to the bay and the ocean. Going to those places is always an inspiration.” She particularly loves San Francisco’s Ocean Beach. “I love walking there, even when it’s cold and foggy.”

Through her bequest, Carol is fulfilling another goal. “I believe it is very important to give to a local affiliate of a national organization, such as Golden Gate Audubon, because it has to raise its own money for issues specific to the local area. I want my money to be used right here in the Bay Area. Golden Gate Audubon has been around a long time. It has a good track record and is the ‘Grande Dame’ of environmental organizations in this area.”

Golden Gate Audubon is extremely grateful for Carol’s gift. “Carol’s planned gift illustrates how individuals can make a tremendous difference in our community,” says Elizabeth Murdock, Executive Director. “We are inspired by her commitment to helping Bay Area youth experience our environment and proud to be a part of making Carol’s vision a reality.”



Carol Sughrue

“There will always be a need for education—today and 100 years from now.”

—Marjorie Blackwell

Secure Your Legacy

You have worked hard and long to achieve success and build wealth for you and your family. Now, your focus is likely to start shifting to both preserving your wealth for your family and donating to philanthropic causes. Please join Golden Gate Audubon members for one of our free upcoming estate planning seminars, *Secure Your Legacy*, which will provide information on the various types of planning tools at your disposal to help preserve, protect, and transfer your wealth to your family or other beneficiaries. Susan Consey, Morgan Stanley vice president and long-time member of Golden Gate Audubon, will provide information to help meet your philanthropic goals. For more information please contact Linda Coffee at 510.843.2222.

**Thursday, November 20, 2008 and
Tuesday, February 3, 2009**

Downtown Oakland

Morgan Stanley Office One Kaiser
Plaza, Suite 900, Oakland, CA 94612

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Downtown San Francisco, Morgan
Stanley Office

101 California Street, 3rd Floor, San
Francisco, CA 94111

Programs begin at 7 p.m.



Burrowing Owl

Jack Barclay

GGA High School Interns Go Wild

With too few young people experiencing real—vs. virtual—nature these days, Golden Gate Audubon's Eco-Oakland internship program aims to change that by providing students and families in East Oakland with hands-on, experiential opportunities that inspire the exploration and protection of the environment. Eco-Oakland interns assist GGA staff on field trips and help lead activities that teach science and conservation—such as tidepooling and shoreline investigation, habitat restoration, stormwater pollution reduction strategies, watershed awareness, restoration work, and shoreline cleanups. The interns come to the program on their own volition in response to flyers distributed to high school teachers by GGA. After a successful year working with the students and their families, the Eco-Oakland Program staff wanted to thank the interns by taking them camping in Yosemite for the weekend. Intern Oscar Murrillo of Oakland High School gave his reason for participating: "I wanted to go because I wanted to learn more about wildlife and have a different perspective of nature."



From left to right: Interns Koy Saefong, Oscar Murillo, GGA's Rubén Gúzman (crouching), GGA's Anthony DeCicco (behind Gúzman), Amado Rosas, and Martin Rochin.

The next morning, we embarked on our monumental journey, four miles up the Mist Trail and four miles back on the John Muir Trail. After the recent melting of the Sierra snow pack, the Merced River and Vernal Falls were raging. Along the way we saw chipmunks, ground squirrels, mule deer, American Robins, Steller's Jays, Common Ravens, and Violet-green Swallows. Although the hike was challenging, the students persevered. Reflecting on her experience, Koy Saefong, of MetWest High School, says, "I learned that I am a very good hiker. During our long hike, I felt as if I was not going to make it, but I did. It felt good to know that I could hike that far, and the view was wonderful!" Says Martin Rochin of Unity High School, "The different views from the trail were marvelous. I'll never forget those beautiful mountains, the majestic trees, and the waterfalls."

On Sunday morning, we awoke to the sight of two mule deer bucks, both with a full set of antlers, drinking from the river. We then happened upon a large, flat rock with indentations, evidence that the native Miwok had used the stones for grinding acorns. The students confirmed their discovery while meeting a Miwok interpreter at the Yosemite Museum who demonstrated flint knapping with obsidian. "Seeing evidence of human presence helped me realize that Yosemite is not only a place for animals

but also has a culturally-rich history as well," shared Rochin.

On our way out of the valley, we took advantage of the summer sun and found a swimming hole near the base of El Capitan. Among the pines next to the river, we watched for more wildlife. We added three Brown Creepers, a group of White-headed Woodpeckers, and an albino Band-tailed Pigeon to our bird list.

As conservationists in training, the interns were impressed by the beauty of the park, but expressed their concern over the impacts made by four million annual visitors. "Although we were identifying different birds, what caught my attention was that the animals are still losing their habitat despite the efforts of the park. The regulations at the park are strict and pretty helpful to the habitat if they are followed. However, animals such as the bears now have a far more limited area to go through," explains Rochin. "I think there should be more protected areas, such as Yosemite, within California and the U.S. There are too few areas in California, so we need to work on the restoration of areas such as MLK, Jr. Shoreline." Saefong (who plans to apply to UC Merced's Environmental Studies Program as a result of her internship), echoes Martin's comments "It would be very nice to see more wildlife around us, especially birds!"

—Anthony DeCicco



Albino Band-tailed Pigeon

As soon as we crossed the park boundary, we saw a coyote dart across the road—our first sign of wildlife. We then entered the valley and stopped to soak in the legendary views. As evening approached, we set up camp at a perfect spot alongside the Merced River. When asked if they wanted to learn how to make a fire, the students were thrilled and took turns stoking the flames as we cooked our meal and made s'mores.



FIELD TRIPS

PAM BELCHAMBER, COORDINATOR

\$ Entrance fee

 Biking trip

For questions about individual field trips, contact the leaders. If you cannot reach a leader, contact Pam Belchamber at 510.549.2839. Field trips are also listed on the Golden Gate Audubon website at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden at
Strybing Arboretum

Saturday, November 1, 10 a.m. – noon
Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis,
SF Nature Education, Darin Dawson, SF
Botanical Garden Docent, 415.387.9160;
www.sfnature.org

Meet for this monthly trip at the kiosk/
bookstore at front gate of Botanical Gar-
den, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way. Families
welcome. Children must be accompanied
by an adult. Co-sponsored by Botanical
Garden, San Francisco Nature Education,
and Golden Gate Audubon Society.

San Francisco Botanical Gardens

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

Sunday, November 2, 8 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Alan Ridley, allanrid@pacbell.net; Helen
McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall,
650.349.3780

Meet at the front gate of the Botani-
cal Garden at Ninth Avenue at Lincoln
Way. This delightful section of Golden
Gate Park has several micro-habitats that
attract an array of resident, migrant and
vagrant birds. This regular monthly trip is
oriented toward beginning birders.

Jewel Lake in Tilden

Berkeley

Friday, November 7, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Phila Rogers, 510.848.9156,
philajane6@yahoo.com

The first Friday of the month Jewel Lake
walk will meet at the parking lot at the
north end of Central Park Dr. for a one-
mile, two-hour plus stroll through this
lush riparian area. Berries are ripening
and migrants are here.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline

Arrowhead Marsh, Oakland

Monday, November 10, 9:30 a.m. – noon
Bob Lewis, bob@wingbeats.org

Join Bob Lewis on the second Monday
in November at Arrowhead Marsh at the
MLK Shoreline, noted for Clapper Rails,
and a number of other skulkers. We will
look for returning shorebirds and water-
fowl. The tide will be high, peaking shortly
after our trip start.

Take Hwy 880 towards the Oakland Airport. Exit at
Hegenberger Road, going West. Turn right on Doo-
little, and left on Swan Way. Turn left into the MLK
Shoreline Regional Park, and continue to the end of
the road. Meet at the last parking lot at 9:30 a.m.

Albany Mudflats

**Saturday November 15, 8:30 a.m.
– 10:30 a.m.**

Oliver James, oliverjames91@gmail.com

We'll search for waterbirds on the mud
and land birds on the bulb. Bring a scope
if you have one. Directions: Exit Buchanan
in Albany and turn west. Park near raised
wooden platforms.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Sunday, Nov. 16, 9:30 a.m.

Carole Kaiser, SF Maritime National Park
Ranger, Carol_Kiser@nps.gov

Meet at the foot of Hyde Street Pier,

at Hyde and Jefferson. This two-hour
beginner's walk will locate birds in an
urban environment. Trip is wheelchair
accessible.

Corona Heights

San Francisco

**Friday, November 21, 8 a.m. – 10:00
a.m.**

Charles Hibbard; Dominik Mosur; Brian
Fitch; Margaret Goodale, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org, 415.554.9600 x16

Meet in front of Randall Museum, 199
Museum Way, at end of Museum Way
off Roosevelt. We will enjoy views of the
city and bay as we circle Corona Heights,
checking east canyon woodland and
north forest for residents and migrants,
as well as monitoring hilltop scrub and
south cliff.

Bodega Bay

Sunday, November 23, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Rusty Scalf, rscalf@sonic.net

Meet at Doran State Beach at 9 a.m.
Bodega Bay has a wide array of birds: the
beach often has Snowy Plovers. The tidal
flats are full of shorebirds. There are div-
ing ducks, loons, and grebes. Black Brandt
winter here and feed on the eelgrass, and
we'll see birds of the open ocean from
Bodega Head. There are several places
to have a good lunch at Bodega, or folks
can bring their own. From Coast Highway
1, take the Doran Beach Road turnoff at
the South end of Bodega Bay. Meet at
Doran Beach parking area at the end of
Doran Beach Road. Email leader for more
details.

Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

**Wednesday, November 26, 9:30 a.m.
– noon**

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066,
hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey,
510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net

Join us at large spherical cage near Nature
Center at Perkins and Bellevue. We will



Bob Lewis

Barrow's Goldeneye

bird around there, then go up the garden path toward Children's Fairyland or walk down the lake toward Embarcadero, after which we will cover what we missed. The returning migrants should be out in force this month, including Barrow's Golden-eyes, and most of the rest of the diving ducks. The park should offer some warblers and a few surprises. Take 12, N, or NL bus to Grand and Perkins, and walk into park on Perkins. Best parking at boat-house lot near spherical cage. Entry (via Bellevue near Childrens Fairyland) is free on weekdays.

Wildlife Refuges of the Sacramento Valley

Sutter, Butte, and Glenn Counties

Saturday and Sunday – December 13–14

Terry Colborn, tlcgdc@aol.com or 530.758.0689.

This weekend field trip to several refuges in the northern Sacramento Valley features both well known habitats for wintering waterfowl and some lesser known spots. On Saturday we'll tour Sacramento NWR: 25% of the world's Aleutian Canada Goose population winters here. Other unique species include Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We'll visit several additional units of the Sacramento NWR complex to the east along the Sacramento River looking for Sandhill Cranes, Tri-colored Blackbirds, raptors, herons, egrets, and shorebirds. At day's end, we'll enjoy a group dinner and overnight in Williams.

On Sunday we'll search the farm roads west of Williams looking for wintering raptors, including Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, Prairie Falcon, and Golden Eagle before heading to Colusa NWR. We'll drive the three-mile auto loop and walk the one-mile nature trail, looking for Barn and Great Horned Owls, Wood Duck, and Hooded Merganser. Harris's Sparrow has been found along this trail in years past.

Next we'll bird the Sutter Buttes area. Target species include Mountain Bluebird, Prairie Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike, and Golden Eagle. In the afternoon we'll tour Gray Lodge WMA where we expect to see large flights of Snow Geese and look for Ross's geese among them. We'll

also look and listen for Sora, Virginia Rail, and American Bittern. We stay at the refuge until dusk when thousands of ibis, ducks, and geese take to wing and fly to nearby fields to feed during the night.

Space is limited and carpooling is essential. There are several hotels in Williams located along Highway 5; early room

reservations are recommended. This is a great trip for beginners and seasoned birders alike. Participants may want to arrive on Friday night for the 7 a.m. start time on Saturday. For further details about meeting, directions, and/or to sign-up, contact the field leader: Terry Colborn at tlcgdc@aol.com or 530.758.0689.



Bicycle Trips

Kathy Jarrett

510.547.1233 (call for cell number; no calls after 9 p.m.), Kathy_Jarrett@yahoo.com
Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids. Dress in layers. Rain cancels.

Quarry Lakes/Alameda Creek/Coyote Hills Bicycle Trip

Fremont, Alameda County

Saturday, November 8, 8:20 a.m. – around 3 p.m.

Meet at 8:20 on the east side of the Fremont BART Station in the parking lot for this all-day trip; return to BART approx. 3 pm. We will see birds starting with our step off the BART train; we will visit riparian, marsh, and bayside habitats. The total distance is about 24 miles mostly on paved bike trails, with almost no uphill. Bicycle helmet required. Picnic lunch at Coyote Hills Visitor Center; bring lunch and liquids. Dress for variable weather. Rain cancels. All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome. Reservations not necessary but an e-mail or phone call would be appreciated.

BART riders: the Fremont train passes through MacArthur at 7:34. Allow time to process your ticket and get your bike to the platform.

Directions by car: take I-880 to Fremont, then the Mowry Avenue exit east toward Central Fremont and go 2.3 mi. on Mowry Avenue. The Fremont BART parking lot is on the east side of the station past Civic Center Dr. View transit schedules online at <http://www.transitinfo.org>. Bay Trail info online at <http://bay-trail.abag.ca.gov/>

East Bay Regional Park District info at <http://www.ebparks.org/>

Millbrae-Foster City Bicycle Trip

San Mateo County

Saturday November 22, 8:55 a.m.

Meet at the Millbrae BART Station at 8:55 a.m. at Rollins Rd and Millbrae Ave. East Bay BART riders passing through MacArthur BART at 7:34 a.m. will take the train for SFO and transfer to the Millbrae train at Embarcadero. The trip will follow the SF Bay Trail from Millbrae to Foster City (approx. 7 miles) and continue around Foster City (approx. 6.5 miles) and possibly Redwood Shores (approx. 5 miles). Return will be from Belmont or San Carlos Caltrain stations. Caltrain is on an hourly schedule on weekends; e.g. it departs Belmont Station northbound at 12:48 p.m. and arrives Millbrae at 1:08 p.m., and departs San Carlos Station at 2:45 p.m. and arrives Millbrae at 3:08 p.m.

We should find birds on the bay, lagoons, lakes, and sewer ponds. The quite flat route is on the SF Bay Trail and other bike paths, mostly paved, some on bike lanes and some on city streets. Bicycle helmet required. Dress in layers, and bring lunch and liquids. Rain cancels. All levels of birders and bicyclists welcome. Bring binoculars. A call or email would be appreciated, but not necessary.

Directions to Millbrae BART, 200 North Rollins Road, Millbrae, CA 94030: From San Francisco, take US-101 south approx. 12 mi then take exit 420 for Millbrae Ave, turn right at E Millbrae Ave, right at N Rollins Rd to parking structure. Allow time to get your ticket processed and your bicycle to the platform. Remember to check Saturday schedules. View transit schedules online at <http://www.transitinfo.org>

Bay Trail maps are online at <http://baytrail.abag.ca.gov/>



SPEAKER SERIES

SARAH REED, COORDINATOR

Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m. **Special program this month takes place at the Oakland Zoo instead of Berkeley.**

Save Our Sandhill Cranes

Gary Ivey, researcher on cranes in the Pacific Flyway

Mike Eaton, crane habitat conservation expert

Special Event: Oakland Zoo, Oakland

Thursday, November 20

These beautiful animals have migrated to California's Central Valley for millennia. Today when they return, they face a reduced and degraded habitat. Urban development and the shift from corn and rice production to vineyards is likely to dramatically diminish what little remains of the winter migratory habitat of this magnificent bird. Come learn about the biology, habitats, and migration of the Sandhill Crane, and the fascinating research that is being done to better understand them. You will be inspired by their history, blown away by the incredible photographic images, and drawn into the story of a bird in our own backyard.



Sandhill Crane

This event is a benefit for Save Our Sandhill Cranes (www.sos-cranes.org) and is sponsored by The Oakland Zoo and Golden Gate Audubon Society. All proceeds will go directly to SOS-C:

Members \$10-\$20, Non-Members \$12-\$20

High School Students and Oakland Zoo Staff \$5

Reception is at 6:30pm and the presentation begins at 7:00pm. Location: The Oakland Zoo at the Marian Zimmer Auditorium in the Maddie's Center for Science and Environmental Education. For directions: <http://www.oaklandzoo.org/zoo-info/planning-your-visit/directions/>. Contact Amy at amy@oaklandzoo.org with questions.

San Francisco: County Fair Building, SF Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way.
Directions: www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html



Burrowing Owl

Burrowing Owls in California: An Abundant Endangered Species?

San Francisco

Tuesday, November 25

Biologist Jack Barclay will review burrowing owl breeding biology, summarize their range, abundance, and habitat associations in California, and discuss why this charismatic bird engenders such a passionate following in the conservation community. The second part of his presentation will focus on the unusual burrowing owl densities he recorded at two study areas in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) in 2006 and 2007. Research of wind turbine-caused bird fatalities suggests burrowing owls may be the second most frequently killed raptor in the APWRA, yet until his work there had been no focused studies of their abundance and distribution in the APWRA. The densities of pairs he recorded, which are the second highest in California next to the Imperial Valley, suggest that there could be several hundred pairs of nesting burrowing owls in the APWRA.

Jack Barclay has been actively involved in Burrowing Owl management, population research, and conservation in California since 1990. He has been managing and monitoring the burrowing owl colony at San Jose International Airport, one of the longest continually monitored (19 years) Burrowing Owl colonies. This colony showed unusual growth in the 1990s after management using artificial burrows began. Mr. Barclay has been active in advancing Burrowing Owl conservation policy through the California Burrowing Owl Consortium since 1990. He organized the California Burrowing Owl Symposium in 2003 and is the senior editor of the recently-published proceedings. Before coming to California in 1989, Mr. Barclay worked at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology as coordinator of the program to reintroduce Peregrine Falcons in the eastern U.S.

CONSERVATION CORNER from page 3

the Blue Greenway—a bicycle and pedestrian path that stretches for 13 miles along San Francisco Bay, from China Basin to Candlestick Park. If you are interested in this project or in attending committee meetings, please contact Noreen Weeden, San Francisco Conservation Committee Chair, at nwweeden@comcast.net.

CITIZEN SCIENCE

Project Feeder Watch is a winter long survey of birds that visit feeders in North America. Participants count species seen at their feeders from November 2008-February 2009. This citizen science contribution helps track winter bird populations and long-term trends in distribution and abundance. This is a project of Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and there is a \$15 annual fee (or \$12 for Lab members) which provides materials, support, and a year-end report. You can sign up online at www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw or call 800-843-2473 or write to Project Feeder Watch, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, PO Box 11, Ithaca, NY 14851-0011.

—Noreen Weeden

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations to support our many conservation, education, and member activities!

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TogetherGreen(anAudubonprogramwithfunds from Toyota): *Wetlands & Wildlands: Engaging Diverse Communities in Conservation*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS

Join the Conservation Committee on your side of the Bay to find out about their local projects. The East Bay Conservation Committee meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. They are currently meeting in different locations each month to discover the best new digs in the East Bay. The San Francisco Conservation Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Randall Museum.

Saturday, November 8, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Monitor the native and non-native plants of Pier 94. Never done it before? Not to worry; we are looking for plant people and recorders alike. Come out and join the fun. Refreshments will be provided! Please RSVP to Jennifer Robinson if you are planning to attend.

Sunday, November 9, 9 a.m. – noon

Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge workday, a part of the Together Green Volunteer Days Program. Help us prepare habitat for California Least Terns. Meet at the main refuge gate at the northwest corner of former Alameda Naval Air Station, Alameda.

Saturday, November 15, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Invasive plant and trash removal at Martin Luther King Jr. Shoreline. Enter the park from Swan Way and follow the road to the end parking lot. Then look for the wooden observation platform (currently being remodeled) adjacent to Arrowhead Marsh.

Saturday, November 15, 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Improve habitat for birds and other wildlife on the coastal dunes and bluffs at Land's End. Meet near East Wash at 1 p.m., at the golf course access road west of the Palace of the Legion of Honor. We will meet at this intersection and walk down through the Golf Course to get to East Wash. Please wear comfortable clothing and sturdy shoes; we will provide tools, water, and snacks. This event is led by Parks Conservancy and co-sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon. Email Jennifer Robinson (below) for more detailed directions.

Saturday, November 22, 9 a.m. – noon

Save the Quail habitat restoration workday at Harding Park. Help with weeding, watering, and planting projects at our native plant site. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Sunset Blvd. and Lake Merced Blvd.

Contact: Jennifer Robinson, Golden Gate Audubon's Volunteer Coordinator, at jrobinson@goldengateaudubon.org.

VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED

On Saturday, September 13th, the fog cleared at Crissy Field just in time for the Golden Gate Audubon Volunteer Appreciation Party. About 35 volunteers, Board Members, and staff congregated at a picnic site along the shore, where a fishing Caspian Tern greeted the group. After mingling over good food and company, order was called to honor the recipients of the Elsie Roemer Conservation and Paul Covell Education Awards. **Matt Zlatunich** was awarded the Elsie Roemer Conservation Award for his work on San Francisco conservation issues, including his creation of the Western Snowy Plover monitoring program. **Audre Newman** received the Paul Covell Education Award for over 7 years of full-time volunteer work in the Eco-Oakland program. **Rusty Scalf** also received the Paul Covell Education Award, for over 20 years of volunteering as a field trip leader, class instructor, and Christmas Bird Count leader, among many other projects. (See October Gull for profiles of the three award recipients.)

—Jennifer Robinson

in Contra Costa County, and south to St. Mary's College in Moraga and the Oakland International Airport. With its wide variety of habitats, the Oakland count typically produces more than 170 bird species.

The San Francisco count circle includes the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge, all of San Francisco, and down the peninsula to San Bruno Mountain and the wetlands north of San Francisco International Airport. Also blessed with a wide variety of habitats, the San Francisco count generally records upwards of 160 species. Both counts have ranked among the top 25 nationwide in numbers of species found.

"The more participants we have, the better we can cover our count circle," says Lewis. "You can search for birds from dawn to dusk—or longer if you look for owls, as

many of us do. We'll assign you to an area that suits your interests and your abilities, where you'll work with an experienced area leader. If you have specific requests, such as to count with friends, we'll accommodate them. If you only have limited time, you can still help by spending a few hours noting birds around your work place, or in a nearby park." Lewis adds that yard watchers are wanted, too, as some species are found mostly at feeders.

Golden Gate Audubon's two Christmas Counts are a popular tradition: Oakland usually attracts 150-plus field observers, and San Francisco more than 90. Both bird counts conclude the day with a festive group dinner. Everyone is invited: field bird-counters, yard-watchers, and anyone else who wants to join the fun. Volunteers willing to help decorate, set up, serve, and clean up at

dinners are greatly appreciated. Please call Jennifer Robinson at 510.919.5873 if you can help out.

—Dave Quady

READY TO COUNT?

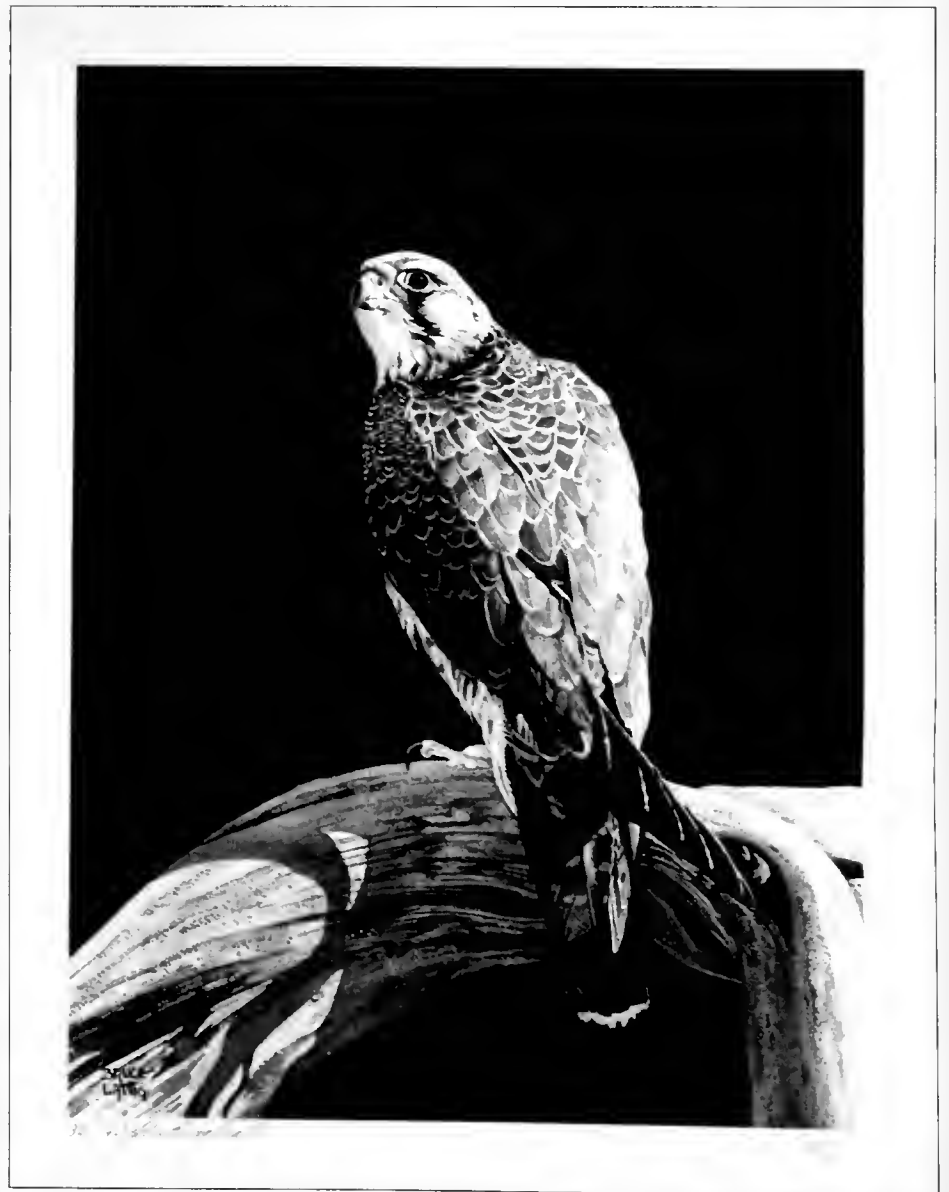
If you would like to participate and need an invitation, please call the Golden Gate Audubon office (510.843.2222) to request one, or sign up on-line at www.goldengate-audubon.org. From that home page, scroll down below the "Get Involved" banner, and click on the "Christmas Bird Count" link to sign up. Act now! Sign-up deadline for the Oakland count is November 21; for the San Francisco count it's December 8. For further information, please call Dave Quady 510.704.9353 or Bob Lewis 510.845.5001 for the Oakland count or Dan Murphy 415.564.0074 for the San Francisco count.

Just in Time for the Holidays: Bird Prints For Sale

In collaboration with the Earth Island Institute, Golden Gate Audubon offers six magnificent signed and numbered prints of American birds for sale.

The prints include Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Goshawk, Golden Eaglets, Barn Owl, and Canada Geese in natural, lifelike scenes. Created in 1974 in watercolor, they were turned into lithographs in a collaboration between renowned scientist and conservationist Dr. John Craighead and noted wildlife artist Bruce Lattig. The signed and limited numbered lithographs (edition of 280), are printed on sheets of 26.5 by 35.5 inch vellum, and packaged with an oversheet in a numbered envelope.

The prints, both framed and unframed, are on view and for sale in Golden Gate Audubon's retail shop at 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley. **Special Introductory Prices** are \$100.00 per image or \$400.00 for the set of six, unframed, for non-members, and \$75.00 per image or \$300.00 for the set of six, unframed, for GGA and Earth Island Institute members. Framed images, with museum glass and archival mounting and matting, are available upon request from GGA, for an additional \$260.00 per small print, and \$325.00 for large prints. **Net sale proceeds benefit avian conservation programs at GGA and EII.** For more information contact Kevin E. Consey, Director of Finance and Administration, 510.292.6274, (kconsey@goldengateaudubon.org).





OBSERVATIONS

BRUCE MAST

AUG 27 - SEP 26, 2008

As fall migration got underway in earnest, hotlines and listservs were abuzz with rare bird reports. Here are a few highlights.

LOONS TO DUCKS

A Laysan Albatross was attracted to a pelagic boat over the Cordell Bank, MRN, on the 14th (RS; oob). Observers from SE Farallon Island, SF, noted 1-2 Cook's Petrels on Aug. 31 (MB; oob). Coming on the heels of a Wedge-tailed Shearwater sighting off SM in August, a Wedge-tailed Shearwater (*Puffinus pacificus*) was observed during a Sep. 1 seawatch from the bluffs overlooking Pescadero Marsh, SM (ADM) and again on the 15th from SE Farallon Island, SF (Rte; oob). On the 21st, a Sooty Shearwater wandered into the bay as far as Lorenzo Cr., Hayward RP, ALA (BR). Manx Shearwaters were documented Aug. 24 at SE Farallon Island (MB; oob) and on Aug. 31 from Pigeon Pt., SM (RTh). The Sep. 14 boat to Cordell Bank found a Storm-Petrel bonanza, including 12 Wilson's, 15 Fork-tailed, 1600 Ashy, and 2 Black Storm-Petrels (RS; oob). An Ashy Storm-Petrel made its way to Hayward RP, ALA, on the 25th (BD).

RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

A Gray-tailed Tattler (*Heteroscelus brevipes*) wandered to SE Farallon Island on Aug. 25 (MB; oob). Three Buff-breasted Sandpipers passed through the region, lingering at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, at Aug. 28-Sep. 1 (KK; CL, ST, LT); at Carmody Rd., SON, Aug. 31-Sep. 7 (AW; mob); and at Salt Pond A13, DENWR, Alviso, SCL, Sep. 9-10 (BB; mob).

The Alviso/ Sunnyvale WPCP salt ponds attracted a remarkable assemblage of sea birds, including a Parasitic Jaeger Sep. 7-14 (MR; mob); a Long-tailed Jaeger Sep. 9-23 (BB; mob); a juvenile Franklin's Gull on Sep. 7 (MR); up to 5 Sabine's Gulls Sep. 12-21 (CW; mob); and an Arctic Tern joining the continuing Black Tern Sep. 10-12 (SR; mob). Elsewhere, Laughing and Franklin's Gulls visited SE Farallon Island on Sep. 1 and 16, respectively (MB, Rte;



Tom Grey

Long-tailed Jaeger

oob). Three Sabine's Gulls worked the bay waters between Oyster Pt. and Coyote Pt., SM, Sep. 13-25 (RTh; JR). A Sep. 13 boat trip to the Farallones discovered a Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) (MB; oob). Two Xantus's Murrelets made the Sep. 14 trip list for Cordell Bank, MRN (RS; oob).

DOVES TO THRASHERS

A Yellow-billed Cuckoo made landfall at SE Farallon Island on the 13th (MB; oob). On the 5th, a Selasphorous hummer at Corona Heights Park, SF, proved to be a Broad-tailed Hummingbird (BF). A juvenile Williamson's Sapsucker forsook the mountains in favor of Dry Cr., SON, on the 25th (PH). A Blue-headed Vireo (*Vireo solitarius*) made it to SE Farallon Island Sep. 9-10 (Rte; oob), accompanied by a hybrid Philadelphia/Red-Eyed Vireo. A Gray Catbird explored Owl Cyn. at Bodega Bay, SON, Sep. 16-19 (DN; ROD, DF). On the 20th, another Gray Catbird stopped briefly at the S. Windmill in GGP, SF (BF; oob).

WOOD WARBLERS TO FINCHES

Migration watchers at outer PRNS logged 16-warbler days on Sept. 13 and 14. On the 12th, a Worm-eating Warbler (*Helminthophila vermivora*) was discovered at the RCA Station at PRNS, MRN (RS). Between the 14th and 17th, SE Farallon Island monitors logged Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora pinus*), Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), and Mourning Warbler (*Oporornis philadelphia*) (Rte; oob). Around the region, birders tallied at least 14 Tennessee and 2 Virginia's Warblers; 2 Northern Parulas; 20+ Chestnut-sided, 9 Magnolia, 1 Cape May, 6 Blackburnian, 3 Prairie, 2 Palm, 1 Bay-breasted, 25+ Blackpoll, and 9 Black-and-white Warblers; 35+ American Redstarts; 6 Ovenbirds; 14 Northern Waterthrushes; and 2 Canada Warblers. Between the 6th and 16th, visitors to El Polin Spring in the Presidio, SF, were treated to a Black-throated Sparrow (AK; mob). Another Black-throated Sparrow appeared at Coyote Pt., SM, on the 26th (RTh). A Baird's Sparrow (*Ammodramus bairdii*) joined the vagrant pandemonium at SE Farallon Island Sep. 3-14 (MB, Rte; oob).

Indigo Buntings visited Battery Chester in the Presidio, SF, on the 11th (DM) and Mendoza (B) Ranch PRNS, MRN, on Sep. 12-13 (RS; Est). Also at Mendoza, a Dickcissel turned up on the 12th (RS). A Bobolink remained through the 15th at Bodega Bay MRNe Lab, SON (ST, LT, DN). Lastly, 3 Bobolinks were tallied Sep. 9-10 at SE Farallon Island (Rte; oob) and another Bobolink joined the Cordell Bank pelagic trip on the 14th (RS; oob).

Sighting Participants with additional information

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers, "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs, the author apologizes for any errors or omissions

Abbreviations for Observers: ADM, Al DeMartini; AK, Andy Kleinhesselink; AW, Alan Wight; BB, Bill Bousman; BD, Bob Dunn; BF, Brian Fitch; BR, Bob Richmond; CL, Carolyn Longstress; CW, Chris Wolfe; DF, Dea Freid; DM, Dominik Mosur; DN, Dan Nelson; DS, Dale Sickles; Esi, Ed Sickles; Est, Emily Strauss; JM, Julio Mulero; JR, Jennifer Rycenga; KH, Kevin Hints; KK, Keith Kwan; LT, Linda Terrill; MB, Matt Brady; MR, Mike Rogers; PH, Phil Henderson; PS, Paul Saraceni; RG, Robert Garriock; ROD, Rob O'Donnell; RS, Rich Stallcup; Rte, Ryan Terrill; RTh, Ron Thorn; SR, Steve Rottenborn; ST, Scott Terrill

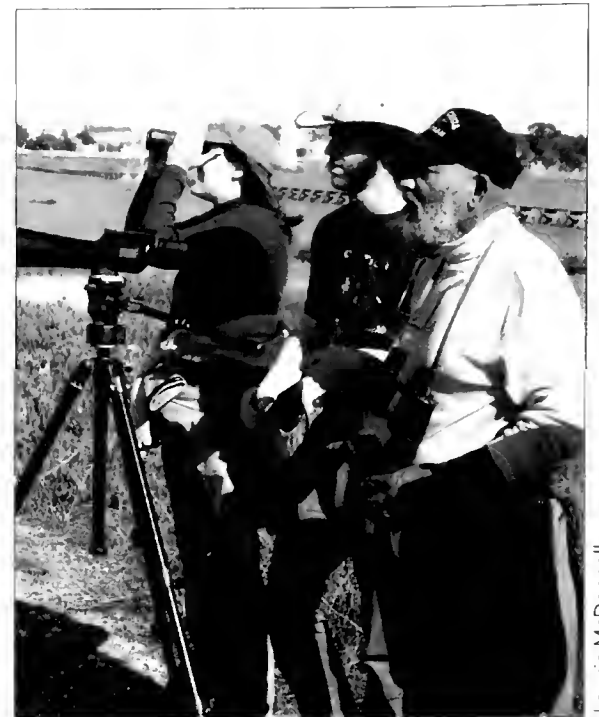
Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBRC, California Bird Records Committee; CC, Contra Costa; CP, County Park; Cr., Creek; Cyn., Canyon; DENWR, Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge; EEC, Environmental Education Center; GGP, Golden Gate Park; IMP, Imperial; L., Lake; MRN, Marin; Mt., Mount; N., North; NAP, Napa; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; OSP, Open Space Preserve; PRNS, Pt Reyes National Seashore; Pt., Point; Rd., Road; Res., Reservoir; RP, Regional Park; RS, Regional Shoreline; S., South; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SP, State Park; SR, State Reserve; WPCP, Water Pollution Control Plant

teer, to input the information and create monthly summaries with help from Bob Lewis, GGA Board Member and North Richmond Shoreline Academy instructor. The data indicated that, after the fall season alone, participants were seeing 12,400 birds each census day. For the spring months combined, 28,631 waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors were seen along the shoreline. Some of the most common birds seen were White-tailed Kites, Black-necked Stilts, American Avocets, Greater and Lesser Scaup, California Gulls, Willets, and many more. Some notable bird sightings that excited participants of all levels were White Pelicans, Red-necked Phalaropes, Osprey, White-faced Ibis, Black Skimmer, and even a Bald Eagle. Lewis' assessment further concluded that many of the common shorebird species surveyed along the Richmond shoreline are now considered "species of concern" due to declining numbers. Nolan found that a lot of shore and water birds are using the wastewater treatment and

Landfill Loop areas, especially in the winter. She continues, "It is a rich area both from the perspective of the bird watcher and from the conservation aspect. Not for rare or unusual sightings, but for significant quantities of those species frequently found along San Francisco Bay." Charlotte echoes the thoughts of many participants and local residents when she says, "The theme for me is: let's not ignore this area. It exists in a heavily industrialized zone with a lot of traffic. Here we have a waste treatment plant that serves the needs of many wintering species right next to a busy landfill operation. Don't squeeze out the birds, protect them, and learn to co-exist with them. And don't assume that Point Pinole provides enough public land and protection in that area of the Bay shore."

Golden Gate Audubon will remain involved in efforts to protect the shoreline, including the Shoreline Academy and additional wildlife appreciation activities for residents.

—Jennifer Robinson



Lawrie McDonnell

GGA volunteers census the North Richmond Shoreline.

Partners in the North Richmond Shoreline Academy include Golden Gate Audubon, the Natural Heritage Institute, the Community Health Initiative, the Parchester Village Neighborhood Council, the Urban Creeks Council, and the West County Toxics Coalition. The North Richmond Shoreline Academy is generously funded by the CALFED Watershed Program.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Gull is the newsletter of the Golden Gate Audubon Society. As a Supporting Member of Golden Gate Audubon, you receive a subscription to *The Gull*, a 10 percent discount on items purchased at our Nature Store, and the satisfaction of supporting local conservation efforts. Local members of the National Audubon Society are encouraged to join Golden Gate Audubon directly. Contact our office at 510.843.2222 for details.

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